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Rev. H. Vashell

A LETTER

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TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,

You have asserted that the "censure" which has proceeded from Montreal is "justly merited" by the Clergy of this city. Permit me to request you to give your readers an opportunity of judging whether you are justified in making this assertion.

What are the facts of the case? The Society of Saint Patrick (chiefly composed, it is to be presumed, of Roman Catholics) address an official invitation to the members of the Society of Saint George, (all, I believe, Protestants) and Saint Andrew, (by far the greater number, if not all, of whom are Protestants) to accompany them, on Saint Patrick's Day, to the Roman Catholic Church of Saint Patrick.

This invitation is officially accepted by a published advertisement from both Societies.* The Clergy of the Church of England thus become acquainted with what many of their people propose to do. They feel that they have to give account at the bar of Christ for the souls committed in the Providence of God to their charge. Their responsibility to God and to the Church, whose Ministers they are,—their responsibility to their people,—compel them to bear testimony to the truth, and to speak in guidance publicly and privately as need shall require and occasion shall be given. Will any venture to say there was here no need, no occasion? The Clergy of the Church of England, having cure of souls, did not think so: they felt at once that they ought to speak plainly to their people, both from their proper place of warning, their pulpits, and also by notice as public (else it would not reach as far) as the occasion of their warning was public.

* Copies of these advertisements are added at the end of the Notes to this Letter. (1.)

They did not, however, follow out their intention in this latter particular; but printed copies of an address,* signed by all the Ministers having cure of souls, to the several Protestant Episcopalian members of the Societies of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick, were distributed in the several Protestant Episcopal Churches, on the morning of Sunday the 13th. Can it be said, if this address was properly worded, (which I will briefly consider presently,) that their method of distributing it was improper? It seemed the only course which, under present circumstances, was likely to effect their object,—to counteract, as far as they could, the very improper proceedings of the several Committees of the three Societies, the one in giving,† the other two in accepting the invitation to attend collectively public service in St. Patrick's Church on St. Patrick's

* Inserted at the end of the Notes to this Letter. (2.)

† The invitation of the St. Patrick Society was *irregular* as well as improper. See the copy of the Second Article of the Constitution of this Society, inserted at the end of the Notes to this Letter. (3.)

Day. And if their address has since obtained a much wider circulation, are they, if this be a fault, altogether responsible for it? It can hardly, I think, be shewn that they are.

But the composition itself is not elegant,—the insinuations are not borne out by facts,—the doctrinal assertions are untrue,—the inferences are false,—and the whole is a presumptuous interference, entirely uncalled for and out of place. Such are the chief objections which I have happened to see or hear. Let us briefly examine their justness. The first hardly calls for notice. Simplicity and godly sincerity do not require a finished style and studied arrangement in order to manifest a plain case. The address was clear enough to obtain a faithful rendering into French, and has been sufficiently understood in the original. I pass to the next charge: “the insinuation that Roman Catholics do not attend Protestant places of worship is not borne out by facts.” I am glad to hear it; but it is very unexpected information. I know that, on an occasion of the

performance of sacred music in the Cathedral, it was proposed to impart to it a more religious character, by making it follow the celebration of evening service ; but this could not be done, because, as was alleged, in such case no Roman Catholics would attend. I have never before heard of their attendance in Protestant places of worship, and I thought (and may venture perhaps still to think) that they are restrained by principle from giving this attendance ; and I urge this, not as matter of reproach, but of fact ; and the annexed extract (*see Note A.*) tends to confirm my previous impression. But “ the doctrinal assertions are untrue : ” that is, Roman Catholics do not commit the idolatry of offering prayers to the Virgin Mary, to Saints and Angels,—do not pronounce the consecrated wafer to be *God*,—do not worship it *as such*. Now really, sir, with the Roman Catholic Missal and Breviary in my hands,—with their acknowledged authorities, the Canons and Decrees (not to speak of anterior Councils, equally authoritative,) of the Council of Trent

before me, I must venture to repeat, *they do do all this*, and, I will add, *more than this*. And with the Bible in their hands, the Ministers of the Church of England have been bold to call this *idolatry*. They were no Protestants if they did not. Upon the subject of the adoration of the host, I subjoin copies of parts of the decrees of the Council of Trent, (*see Note B,*)—an extract from the declaration at the end of the Communion Service in the Prayer Book of the Church of England, sanctioned and enjoined I need hardly remark, by the Imperial Parliament, (*see Note C,*)—and a very important extract from the present Bishop of Exeter's "Letters [Appendix, p. 359] to Charles Butler, Esquire," (*see Note D,*)—shewing that, *upon our principles, even in the judgment of Roman Catholics themselves, we must consider the worship of the consecrated wafer idolatrous*. Is it necessary, then, to meet the next assertion against the Clergy: "that the inference which they draw," viz. that unconstrained attendants upon idolatrous services (I pass by the bowing down

at the elevation of the Host, which may or may not be required, may or may not take place : I know that it is generally considered to be required, and is also, I am sorry to say, generally done,) "are partakers of the idolatry committed." If they are not partakers of what is done there, what do they there at all ? Does the denial of participation admit of argument in its support ? I think plain minds will feel that it does not. But, "the bigotry, intolerance, presumption, &c. &c. of the Clergy is disgusting," I think you say ; and others have spoken almost as harshly. At the ordination of Priests in the Church of England, they are asked by the Bishop, "*Will you be ready with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word, and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your cures, as need shall require and occasion shall be given ?*" Answer, *I will, the Lord being my helper.*" I think the call of the Ministers of this city to their people,

“as Protestants, in consistency, charity, and faith, to stay away from the service of the Roman Catholic Church,” follows not improperly, —may I not write *necessarily*?—upon this promise. I will only further refer, in their justification, to Ezekiel, chap. III, verses 17, 18, 19 : “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die ; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life ; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” And, Hebrews xiii. 17 : “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; *for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account* : that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable

for you." The Scriptures are the armoury and only ultimate authority of Protestant Christians.

One word I will take leave to add of advice, if they will permit it, to the Clergy of the Church of England themselves. If Protestantism exist so much in name only, upon whom does the chief blame rest? Upon the untaught, or those who are set to teach? Were the plain truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, more especially taught,—early and constantly taught,—not only in their simplicity, but in their plain and direct opposition to the errors in doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome, would an affectionate scriptural warning to your people, so taught, produce such effects as you have been made to witness? I trow not. Opposition and enmity, for a time, and from the generality of your people, you must expect, (Matthew x. 34—39;) but if the Lord give faithfulness to his Ministers, and they are enabled to speak the truth in love, "they may be persecuted, but they shall not be forsaken,

cast down, but they shall not be destroyed."
(2 Cor. iv. 9.) Let them pray in the name of
the Lord Jesus, and they shall be filled with
the Holy Ghost, and speak the word of God
with boldness," (Acts iv.) and be among their
people, eventually, "in the fulness of the blessing
of the Gospel of Christ."

C. S. P.

*** Permit me to ask the Editors of other papers to follow
your sense of justice in giving insertions to these observations.

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NOTES.

NOTE A.

"Quest.—But, at least, is it not very uncharitable in Roman Catholics, to *abjure all manner of communication in religious exercises*, with those of every other religion ?

"Ans.—This abjuration or refusal, so far from being uncharitable, is, in their mind, enforced by the truest charity. Convinced as Roman Catholics are, and firmly persuaded, that there is, and that there can be, no other true religion than their own ; they cannot consistently, nor candidly, nor lawfully approve, or even appear to approve, any other religion ; which they certainly should appear to do, were they thus to join in these religious exercises, or frequent places of worship belonging to separated communions. Such temporizing conduct has the aspect of prevarication : it is in some sort betraying the truth of God. *In their principles, they must abhor it*, as calculated to delude their separated brethren into an unfounded, and therefore most dangerous, security. Charity here compels them to stand off. Besides, esteeming the gift of Divine Faith to be invaluable, inasmuch as without faith it is impossible to please God, they cannot innocently expose themselves to the danger of losing it."—(Extracted from "The Key of Paradise," published in Philadelphia, 1834, arranged by a Clergyman, approved by Bishop Kenrick.)

NOTE B.

Con. Trid. Sess. XIII. C. 1.

"Principio docet sancta Synodus, et apertè ac simpliciter profitetur, in almo sanctæ Eucharistiæ Sacramento, post panis et vini consecrationem, Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, verum Deum atque hominem, verè, realiter, ac *substantialiter* sub specie illarum rerum sensibilibus contineri. * * *

Canon VI.

"Si quis dixerit in sancto Eucharistiæ Sacramento Christum unigenitum Dei Filium non esse *cultu latriæ*, etiam externo, *adorandum*, atque ideò nec festivâ peculiari celebritate venerandum, neque in processionibus, secundum laudabilem et universalem Ecclesiæ sanctæ ritum et consuetudinem, solemniter circumgessandum, *vel non publicè, ut adoretur, populo proponendum*, et ejus adoratores esse idololatrias; *anathema sit.*"

NOTE C.

"It is hereby declared, That thereby" [the gesture of kneeling] "no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine there bodily received, or unto any corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore *may not be adored*; for *that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians.*"—
(Declaration at the end of the Communion Service, in the Church of England Book of Common Prayer.)

NOTE D.

"Meanwhile, let it not be forgotten, that it has been confessed by Roman Catholics themselves, that if the doctrine of Transubstantiation be erroneous, the worship founded on it is idolatrous. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester,* the most learned of English Papists, speaks of this consequence in much stronger terms than a Protestant would use; and Bellarmine,† the ablest advocate of their cause in Rome itself, treats it as a matter of course."—(Dr. Phillpott's "Letters to Charles Butler, Esquire.")

* Johan. Roff. cont. Ecolamp. l. I. c. 2:—

"*Nulli dubium esse potest, ei nihil in Eucharistiâ præter panem sit, quin tota ecclesia jam per XV annorum centenarios, idololatra fuerit, ac proinde quotquot ante nos hoc sacramentum adoraverunt, omnes ad unum esse damnatos. Nam creaturam panis adoraverunt creatoris loco.*"

† Bell. de Euch. l. IV. c. 29:—

"*Quod ad adorationem attinet, Sacramentarii omnes idololatriam appellant ejusmodi adorationem. Neque id mirum videri debet cum ipsi non credant Christum reipsa esse præsentem, et panem Eucharistiæ nihil esse, nisi panem ex furno.*"

(1.)

COPIES OF ADVERTISEMENTS WHICH APPEARED
IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

“ SAINT GEORGE’S SOCIETY.

“ At a Special Meeting of the Board of Management of the St. George’s Society, held at the Albion Hotel, on Monday, 7th instant,—

“ The following communication, received from the St. Patrick Society was read:—

“ Resolution adopted by the St. Patrick Society, on the 29th February, 1836 :—

“ That the Members of the Society be requested to meet at the Albion Hotel, on the 17th March next, at Nine, A. M., to proceed thence to St. Patrick’s Church, to hear Divine Service; and that our Brethren of the St. George and St. Andrew Societies be invited to join and accompany us.”

“ Whereupon it was Resolved—

“ That this Board for itself, and on behalf of the St. George’s Society, acknowledges and accepts, with pleasure, the invitation of the St. Patrick Society; and that the Secretary be hereby directed to cause the same, with these proceedings, to be inserted three times in the *Quebec Gazette* and the *Quebec Mercury*, for the information and guidance of the Members of the Society.

(By order,)

WM. KEMBLE,
Secretary.

“ Quebec, 7th March, 1836.”

" SAINT ANDREW'S SOCIETY OF QUEBEC.

" The President, Vice-Presidents and Managers of St. Andrew's Society, accepting with pleasure on behalf of the Society, the invitation of the President and Officers of the St. Patrick's Society, to proceed with them to attend Divine Service in St. Patrick's Church, on the 17th March instant, hereby invite the Members of St. Andrew's Society to meet for that purpose at the Albion Hotel, on the 17th instant, at Nine o'clock in the forenoon.

(By order,)

J. BRUCE,
Secretary.

" Quebec, 7th March, 1836."

" SAINT PATRICK'S DAY.

" Thursday next, the seventeenth instant, being the Festival of Ireland's Patron Saint, a *solemn High Mass will be performed* in St. Patrick's Church, at Ten o'clock. —The Anniversary Sermon will be preached by the Rev. Mr. McMahon, after which *a Collection will be taken up to aid in finishing the interior of said Church.*

" E. G. CANNON,
Secretary.

" Saturday, 12th March, 1836."

(2.)

COPY OF THE ADDRESS FROM THE CLERGY OF
QUEBEC, HAVING CURE OF SOULS.

"TO THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPALIAN MEMBERS OF THE
SOCIETIES OF SAINT GEORGE, SAINT ANDREW, AND
SAINT PATRICK.

"Christian Brethren,—

"We, the undersigned Clergy of the Church of England, to whom in the Providence of Almighty God the trust to watch for your souls as they that must give an account is confided, request your considerate attention to the following observations :—

"We see by notices from your several Societies, that it is proposed that you should collectively attend Divine Service, the 17th instant, at the Roman Catholic Church of St. Patrick. In all Christian charity, and as in duty bound, we wish to remonstrate with you on this head.

"And first we will observe, that your Roman Catholic brethren cannot be offended if you stay away from their Churches, for do they ever attend yours ?

"But if they were to take offence, still our duty remains the same—to beseech you not to give attendance upon services which, as Protestants, you protest against, and profess to consider *idolatrous*. *Idolatrous*, as consisting in part of prayers offered to the Virgin Mary—to Saints and Angels ;—*especially idolatrous*, if, as we believe will be the case, High Mass be offered. for then the Consecrated Wafer is pronounced to be *God !* and is *worshipped* AS SUCH ! If you say you can

be present and yet not partake of this idolatry, surely you deceive yourselves. By your unconstrained presence,—not to say your *bowing down*, which we believe is required of you at the elevation of the Host,—you surely do partake it.

"Therefore we call upon you as Protestants, in consistency, charity, and faith, to stay away from this service.—We must 'fear God,' and without this we cannot 'love the brotherhood.'

(Signed)

" HARVEY VACHELL,
" Curate of Quebec.

" J. HUDSON,
" Chaplain to the Forces.

" E. W. SEWELL,
" Minister of the Chapel of the Holy Trinity.

" J. BROWN,
" Evening Lecturer at the Cathedral
and Minister of St. Paul's* Chapel.

" W. ANDERSON,
" Minister of St. Peter's Chapel.

" Quebec, 11th March, 1836."

* Printed by mistake "St. Peter's."

BIBLIOTHÈQUE
SAINT-SULPICE

be placed and not the reverse of this industry, surely
 and honest industry. By your own admission pre-
 vious to your coming here, which we believe
 is the kind of you at the election of the House—your
 country to support it.
 (3)
 Therefore we will not let us Protestants in con-
 sideration of you and your country from this

CONSTITUTION OF THE SAINT PATRICK SOCIETY OF QUEBEC.

(3)

"H. V. V. V. V."

"THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

"ARTICLE II.—The Society is instituted for the
 purpose of affording relief and advice to the natives of
 Ireland and their descendants, who may stand in need
 thereof, and of promoting union among all classes of
 Irishmen and those of Irish origin in Canada, and with
 this view *all religious and political subjects or discus-
 sions are prohibited.*"

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